

# Light:

A Journal devoted to the Highest Interests of Humanity, both Here and Hereafter.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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## NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

The August number of the *Theosophist* contains the latest attempt on the part of the Occultist authorities to post us up on our chances of Re-Incarnation. What with Mr. F. F. Cook, the authors of the "Perfect Way," Kardec, the Adept Brothers, and Madame Blavatsky, a "multitude of counselors" indeed, there ought to be wisdom. As a matter of fact, what there is is not very clear. But I gather that the author of "Isis Unveiled" was at first "not permitted to enter into details"—now "she is told to do so." She says that "Re-Incarnation, i.e., the appearance of the same individual, or rather of his astral monad (or the *personality*, as claimed by the modern Re-Incarnationists) twice on the same planet is not a rule in nature, but an exception." If it be asked what is this "astral monad," it is replied that man is a trinity, consisting of spirit, soul, and body. Each member of this trinity is made up of component parts. The body—of the astral body, the life principle, and the physical body. They die absolutely when the change called death supervenes. The soul is composed of the mind (animal soul) and passion. These together form the astral monad, or personal Ego, and its vehicle. They survive the change called death, and it is these that, under exceptional circumstances, are Re-Incarnated or, usually, are destroyed after a time. These are "shells," according to the *Theosophist*, that communicate at circles, maintaining a certain fitful and specious identity for a time until extinction comes. The spirit or individuality is the Spiritual monad, and is eternally indestructible. The man's future state depends on what he makes himself now, and whether he is Re-Incarnated or becomes a "shell" depends on his present life. At any rate, the man that we know will not be re-born, but his Spiritual monad will re-clothe itself "in various human forms, every one of them a new *personality*, thousands of times before the end of the great cycle." That seems to be the latest word of wisdom, or more precisely, the most recent expression of opinion by those who approach the subject from an Oriental point of view.

There are, I believe, various records of the appearance of a veiled white lady in different places in Germany. I do not know how many there may be of such, but I have discovered among my papers a translation from a German book, the name of which I am ignorant of, which treats of one of these. What is the theory of such appearances? They seem to be premonitory of death in most, if not all, cases. Yet they cannot be referred to cases of guardianship, for though the calamity is foretold it is not averted. I append the narrative to which I allude.

"The most important, remarkable, and mysterious appearance, called 'The White Lady,' I have spared to the last, and will conclude this book with it. It is a commonly well-known fact that in several castles, for example, in Castle Neuhaus in Bohemia, in Berlin, Beyreuth, Darmstadt, and in this Castle of Carlsruhe, besides several other places, a female figure has been seen from time to time, tolerably tall, clothed in white, and wearing a veil, through which her features can be easily recognised. She generally appears at night, and it is true, not long before the death of some kingly person, though many such persons die without the Spirit being seen. Sometimes she shews,

through her appearance, the death of some men not of royal blood, but who belong to the Court.

"Merian relates in the 5th vol. of his 'Theatre of Europe' that the lady was often perceived in the years 1652 and 53, in the Castle of Berlin, and the following two testimonials are convincing proofs of the certainty of her appearance:—A worthy and excellent lady went, one evening in the twilight, for a walk with her husband in the gardens of the Castle of Berlin, without in the least thinking of the White Lady. She saw her all at once quite distinctly standing before her in the path, and so close that she had full opportunity of remarking her whole figure. She was very much frightened, and sprang towards her husband, who was on the other side of the road, and the White Lady vanished away. This gentleman told me that his wife was as pale as death from fright, but that he himself had not seen the Spirit. Soon afterwards a death occurred in the family of this lady. The other testimony was that of a Christian-minded, learned man, who held an important office at the Court, and was a valuable friend to me. This man was incapable of deceit, delusion, or untruth, and of this anyone who knew him would testify. This gentleman went late one evening along one of the walks of the Castle of the place, and, without thinking of her, this White Lady came walking towards him. At first he thought it must be a young lady from the Castle who wished to frighten him. He hastened towards the figure, but discovered that she was the White Lady, as she vanished before his eyes. He had observed her so exactly that he could well remember her countenance through the folds of her veil; also there gleamed from her a pale light.

"At the time of the three high feasts she was often accustomed to appear. She appeared principally at night, but sometimes in broad daylight. At the castle of Neuhaus in Bohemia she has been seen for more than 300 years. At first she appeared principally at mid-day, often looking out of the window of an uninhabited castle tower. She was quite white, and had upon her head a widow's white veil with white strings, was of tall stature, and modest mien. That she had been a Catholic in her lifetime is understood, for 300 years before no other religion was known.

"There are two examples of her having spoken. A certain great princess was with her ladies in her room, standing before the glass trying on a new head-dress. As she was asking one of the ladies what time it was, the White Lady stepped from behind a folding screen, and said, 'It is ten o'clock, dear.' The princess, as may be easily imagined, was excessively frightened. After a few weeks she became ill and died. In December of the year 1628, she also appeared in Berlin, and there she was heard to say the following Latin words: '*Veni judica viros et mortuos, judicium mihi adhuc superest.*'" M.A. (Oxon.)

A correspondent, writing from Ventnor, Isle of Wight, says that on broaching the subject of Spiritualism amongst casual acquaintances, he finds in most cases that an intelligent interest is manifested, with an evident desire for some practical experience. He adds that, in such cases, a specimen copy of "LIGHT" is usually in some mysterious way discovered in his coat tail pocket, and handed to the friend desirous of perusing its pages, with a suggestion that further information can be readily obtained on application to the Central Association of Spiritualists, or other similar society. It is to be remarked, as an indication of progress, that even with those who, from an acknowledged ignorance of the subject in its practical bearings, are disposed to be incredulous, there is an entire absence of a spirit of hostility; and, in the most extreme cases, met with by our correspondent, the parties simply excuse themselves by the observation "that no doubt it is true, but it does not particularly interest them."



### "MISS WOOD'S MATERIALISATIONS."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The theory of line-and-hooks, puppets, crawlings, kneelings, and ventriloquism, in connection with Miss Wood's séances, will really not do. I witnessed only one of these séances, but it proved more than sufficient for me to acquire the perfect certainty of the impossibility of imitating the phenomena that passed before my observation. The séance was held in May last at the rooms of the C.A.S. There were present twelve or fourteen investigators, amongst whom were Mr. and Mrs. Horne from America, Mr. Defries from Australia, and several other old Spiritualists, all possessing, like myself, a large stock of experience in these matters. The "door-net" precaution was taken—an excellent test—but as I never make capital of these safeguards, preferring to rely on my senses for discriminating the genuine from the spurious, I would not assist in, or verify, the operation. The light was sufficient to discern the hours of my watch, marked by very slender hands. I was sitting next to, and about three feet from, the door of the cabinet. "Pocha" came out from behind the curtain, nimble and erect, emitting a continuous mouse-like utterance—he! he! he! By advancing about four feet from the cabinet she stood before me, and I had ample opportunity of scrutinising her narrowly. She wore no crinoline, so that had the figure been a taller one, in a kneeling posture, I should certainly have perceived a couple of understandings protrude from under her dress, which was not the case. With her diminutive hands she patted repeatedly my face, and then kissed me several times, *making me feel the warmth and direction of her breath.* The next materialisation was of a figure measuring *at least six feet high*—a rather ponderous fish for any kind of hook, line, or rod. This figure walked to the furthest extremity of the circle, a distance of at least ten feet, and shook hands with the company. And so did also a third materialisation, much less in stature, that followed. To believe that all this could be done by piscatorial, ventriloquial, or Punch and Judy tricks, would be a libel on the human intellect, landing us inevitably on hypotheses and postulates still more paradoxical. See:—The medium could not perform all these feats unaided; who then could help in the operation? Who could, except the much esteemed gentleman who prepares and directs the séances at the Association, *i.e.*, the worthy secretary of our Institution? It is he who must have the key of a secret cupboard which he has had cut in the wall of the séance cabinet, a cupboard wide and deep enough to contain a collection of gigantic Marionettes, and an arsenal of iron rods, thick as hop poles, and no end of hooks and lines of all dimensions ready for the performance!

But here we fall upon another difficulty. How could a frail medium wield such weighty implements? An easy suggestion naturally occurs to the mind. A couple of commissioners from the barracks in the Strand could be procured for a small consideration. Such the premises, such the conclusions!

It is to be hoped that Miss Wood has perfectly understood that whatever has been said about creepings, kneelings, and legerdemain in connection with her séances, had no reference to her personally, but were transcendental argumentations and abstract speculations about possible and impossible things that might occur at any séance, and applicable to mediums in general. I am anxious she should understand this, lest any doubt in her mind that such suspicions could be intended for herself might disturb her mind and hinder the further development of such a truly excellent sensitive. Meanwhile I would suggest the advisability of leaving the question of how Spiritual phenomena could be simulated to those distinguished gentlemen, Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke.—Respectfully yours,

London, August 28th, 1882.

G. DAMIANI.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—One little test at Miss Wood's séance, of which I gave some account in last week's "LIGHT," escaped my memory.

Some years ago, at a very fortunate séance, three Spirit friends of mine agreed each to give me a sign of their presence. The signs were different, and with strange mediums I was to recognise each friend by his or her sign, if they could do nothing more. They have each given me these tests, with different mediums.

At this séance with Miss Wood one of these friends materialised, and came over to me, and gave me her sign. I am as familiar with her form as I am with my own shadow. Was not

this better as a test of Miss Wood's genuineness than a pound of pack-thread laced about her could be? I like tests that "crop up" of themselves.

I was one evening at a séance where some fine materialisations took place in the light. After these some one said "Let us have a dark séance." We sat around a large table, the light was put out, and I asked mentally if any friend of mine were present. One of the friends, who had agreed to give me his sign, was a strong man in earth life. Directly, in answer to my thought, a powerful hand grasped mine, and his sign was given. Supposing some sitter's hand had left the table and grasped mine, how could the secret sign have been given? Four distinct movements went to make the one sign, and no one knew it but myself.

Last winter a friend of mine at a distance, who could not at the time communicate with me by ordinary means, wanted some articles of much importance to her. A Spirit spoke to me through the mediumship of a friend, at a quite informal séance, and said "I have seen —, and she wishes you to purchase — [here a list of articles was given.]" The Spirit went on to say how the money was to be had to pay for them.

I did not forget the message, but I did not buy the articles at once, as there seemed to be no special haste. In a few days I received a letter from my friend enclosing the same list of articles, and asking me to buy them and pay for them as the Spirit had told me.

About two years ago I went on a secret mission to see a friend of mine in another county. I had a conversation with a distinguished person, with whom I was talking privately in the hall on the diffusion of Spiritualism. I expressed an opinion that a million of persons were interested in, and influenced by, one prominent Spiritualist. That evening, after my return to London, I was sitting with the friend who was the medium above alluded to, and the same Spirit spoke to me. He said, "I went with you on your mission, and I heard what you said to — in the hall, and I think you underrated the number of persons influenced by —. I think there are *more than a million.*"

This Spirit has manifested great interest in my work and welfare, and of late has arranged that my friend, who is his medium, should spend the autumn and winter with me. In early autumn we are to begin a series of séances that shall be open to honest investigators, untrammelled by the rule of my own special circle. Many a man who has not time to make his habits better, who would be unfitted for his daily, hourly work, by giving up his cigar or his ale, still deserves to know that there is a life beyond the grave. All that is required for these séances is that there be good faith on the part of the inquirer. The number at each séance cannot exceed ten. The number of séances in one course is five, so that those who cannot be admitted to the first course can wait for the second, or third. Each person who wishes to join this circle will send his or her name to me as a candidate. The name will be submitted to the Spirits under whose guidance the séances are to be held, and they will accept or reject the proposed member.

Side by side with these séances will be those of my inner circle, where the rule is abstinence from flesh as food, and from tobacco, spirits, and malt liquors, tea, coffee, and cocoa. These séances will not as a rule have physical phenomena, but mostly teaching by the direct voice or by trance-speaking.

Since Mr. Eglinton has devoted himself to business in the earnest hope of being able to use his gift freely for the cause of Spiritualism, when he shall have attained pecuniary independence, we are, with many others, unhappily deprived of the exercise of his most reliable and valuable gifts; but in the meantime we have been able to engage the medium to whom I alluded for our séances. The materialisations in his presence are among the best I have ever seen, and the range of phenomena is broad and varied, and such as must convince the most incredulous of the reality of Spirit manifestations.

MARY S. G. NICHOLS.

32, Fopstone-road, South Kensington.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I wonder if rescued Christendom—*circa* A.D. 800—got up an anti-vivisection society, and persecuted St. George in his old age for having done the poor dragon to death without anaesthetics. I imagined myself, on a recent occasion, to be playing the part of the mediæval champion. I believed myself to be doing Miss Wood knightly service in rescuing her from that worst foe of an honest woman—an indiscreet admirer. I looked



to have been blessed by her supporters, and lo, but for the kindly interposition of the Editor of "LIGHT," I should have been altogether cursed.\* Nay, when I wished to attend the last séance, held at the rooms of the C. A. S., I was warned by the Secretary that it would be more prudent to retire; and, without prejudice to my valour, I did retire. It is not recorded that St. George, himself, encountered more than one dragon at a time.

And yet I had thought that the issues in hand were plainly stated; that it must be obvious to all that my lance was levelled, not against Miss Wood as a medium, but against Mr. Collingwood as her champion. Indeed, I had stated categorically more than once that I brought, and intended to bring, no charge against the medium herself; nor only so, but I expressly, and in set terms, disclaimed beforehand the imputation of general scepticism which has been brought against me by more than one correspondent. They say that there is no surer way of deceiving the subtle oriental mind than to tell the direct truth. Have Madame Blavatsky and those direful Brothers so far corrupted our Western simplicity that we must say the same of English Spiritualists? I am as badly off as if I had propounded a new system of transcendental philosophy. I might almost exclaim with the dying Hegel, "There is but one man who understands me"—the editor of "LIGHT," to wit.

Since words, so far, have served but to darken counsel, let me, if possible, re-state my position in less ambiguous language. In "LIGHT" of the 29th July, Mr. Collingwood had published an account of some phenomena which he had witnessed through Miss Wood's mediumship; at the same time giving a minute description of the tests employed for the purpose of guarding against fraud. In "LIGHT" of the 19th ultimo I attempted to shew—and I think that I succeeded—(1) That the phenomena, as described by Mr. Collingwood, and as witnessed by me, were of value if—and only if—it could be conclusively proved that the medium could not leave the cabinet; and (2) that the precautions taken offered little, if any, impediment to fraud of the kind indicated.† And I then proceeded to paint in some detail the equivocal effect upon an outsider of such a séance, under such conditions. In all this I was not denying the possibility of materialisation in general, or the honesty of Miss Wood in particular. Surely, in demonstrating the uselessness of a test, I am no more casting a slur upon the medium's honesty than did Mr. Collingwood and the rest of the circle, when they imposed the test in the first instance, as a precaution against possible fraud!

I have since learned, in the course of conversation with Mr. Collingwood, that he had stronger evidence in the back-ground for the genuineness of the phenomena which he described: it is to be regretted that he did not publish that evidence. I have also received from another source testimony, which is to me almost the strongest possible, of the good faith and good mediumship of Miss Wood. It is to be regretted that she is not blessed with a gift second only to a fair reputation—a judicious friend. But had this further information been in my possession three weeks ago, I should still have written as I did. For in so writing I held that I did good service, not only to Spiritualism, but to Miss Wood herself. And I hold so still.

There are two different points of view from which a séance may be regarded. The first is that which has been above

indicated—a séance conducted on "scientific" principles, in which a number of persons, more or less unfamiliar with the subject and with each other, meet with the view of eliciting a definite phenomenon, or series of phenomena, under conditions prescribed by themselves, and in which the *mala fides* of the medium is taken into account from the first as a possible or probable element in the result, and various elaborate precautions are therefore taken to eliminate as far as possible this source of error. This is the ordinary test séance. Or a séance may be looked at from the standpoint illustrated by Mrs. Heckford in her lucid and able letter published in the current number of this journal. To a séance of this kind none but experts are admitted; no precautions against fraud are employed, for fraud is as little reckoned with, and may, no doubt, be as effectually eliminated in the long run, as in the study of chemistry or optics: nor are the conditions laid down beforehand, to which the desired phenomena must conform; the phenomena are allowed to develop themselves. Now the question presently before us is not which of the two methods is the better. Each in its own way is good; each is logical and consistent, and, to a certain extent, supported by common-sense and experience. But there can be no question of any combination of the two. To hold a séance, partly of experts, and partly of the uninitiate, and to devise precautions which shall quiet the vigilance of the sitters, whilst they are powerless to prevent fraud, is not inconsistent or injudicious—it is preposterous.

London, Sept. 1st.

FRANK PODMORE.

#### THOUGHT-READING.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—The following may interest those of your readers who are engaged in psychical research:—

Some years ago I was invited to give a séance at Cheltenham to a select company desirous of witnessing the phenomena of mental action in somnambulism induced by animal magnetism. The experiments were conducted by Dr. Freeman for a committee of investigators. They were various, but on this occasion I only cite the following. When the turn came for one of the investigators, he produced a sealed envelope, which he placed in the somnambule's hand, saying that if he could read the writing contained in it he would become a believer in clairvoyance. After a short interval the somnambule said, "I see three words, they are in French. No! three words, but not French. This is strange; let me hold your hand." The investigator gave his left hand. "Now," said the somnambule, "think your words well." Presently the somnambule said, "The words are 'Can you polk?'" and dropped the investigator's hand; but he immediately added, "No! I see the three French words now, they are '*Fleur de Marie*.'" The investigator said "That's wrong, you were right at first." Dr. Freeman opened the envelope and shewed the writing: it was "*Fleur de Marie*." The bewilderment of all was not diminished by the investigator's wife saying that in order to complicate the test, and to have a test for herself, she had substituted, before sealing the envelope, a piece of writing of her own for that of her husband: "*Fleur de Marie*" was of her writing.

I don't know whether students in psychology will concur with me, but my understanding of the perplexity is this, that when the somnambule was *en rapport* with the investigator the experiment demonstrated Thought-reading, but when that *rapport* ceased it demonstrated clairvoyance.

In presence of such facts, I cannot help exclaiming with the poet:—

"Can such things be,  
And overcome us like a summer cloud,  
Without our special wonder!"

10, Berkeley Gardens, Kensington.

ADOLPHE DIDIER.

THE C.A.S.—The resident Secretary of the Central Association of Spiritualists returns to the Metropolis on Tuesday next; and the premises, which have been undergoing thorough repair and re-decoration, are expected to be completed in readiness for re-opening for the winter season on the following Monday, 17th inst. Members willing to prepare papers for reading at the forthcoming fortnightly Monday evening discussions and social meetings, are requested to communicate with the Secretary with as little delay as possible, in order to facilitate the preparation of the programme. An early announcement will be made of all arrangements for séances and other meetings during the coming season.

\* See the Editorial note at the end of the correspondence in "LIGHT," of the 26th ultimo. The world has, no doubt, lost much in those rejected philippics. But is it too late even now to publish an expurgated edition of them, with . . . say, or discreet Latin equivalents for all the naughty words?

† The ambiguity of my language is not always to blame. I said in my former letter that "I crawled through the meshes and back again with considerable ease." When T. G. P. translates this into "With difficulty Mr. Podmore and myself escaped from such an aperture," and, "further we did not return through the network," he can hardly plead that he misunderstood me. And these quotations offer a fair sample of the manner in which T. G. P. and Mr. Paynter deal with this part of the subject. When Mr. Paynter, for instance, says:—"There were not merely 'two or three' threads of coloured silk, when Miss Wood sat, but about a dozen at least, scattered at random over the network," he shows that he had neglected to get up his brief. Had he read through my letter with ordinary care he would have seen that the "two or three threads" therein referred to were the threads which it would be necessary for anyone wishing to pass through the net work to untie. I had already clearly stated that "the junctions of the cords—at least the principal junctions—were fastened by threads of green silk." But the medium would not have to untie them *all*. I myself only left a few junctions unfastened. Mr. Paynter and T. G. P. also make a great point of the colour of the silk. The colour was, of course, quite irrelevant if, as I obviously assumed, the silk could be used again. And if Mr. Paynter thinks that the same silk could not be used again why does he lay stress upon the difficulty of *untying* it in the dark? It might, with safety be broken, if fresh silk was to be substituted. He is clearly not entitled to *both* difficulties. I asserted—and assert—that a skilful woman's fingers, armed, perhaps, with a needle (and I am willing to add, a pair of tweezers), and in presence of a circle who are not clear whether all the junctions were tied, as Mr. Blyton is inclined to think, or whether the threads were "scattered at random over the network," would have little difficulty in untying and re-tying the silk, using the *same* pieces. The "difficulty" of crawling through the network, whether backwards or forwards, in the dark or in the light, is a mere creature of T. G. P.'s brain. The double operation took me certainly not more than five minutes; and it could be done in very much less time.



OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"  
4, NEW BRIDGE STREET,  
LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

#### TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "LIGHT." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their sésances.

The Editor cannot undertake the return of manuscripts unless the writers expressly request it at the time of forwarding, and enclose stamps for the return postage.

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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#### TESTS.

Without wishing to take part in the controversy excited by Mr. Podmore's letter, I should like to express agreement with much that your correspondent, Mrs. S. Heckford, says on the subject of Tests. I have heard these satirically defined as devices to exclude the conditions under which what it is desired to witness can occur. Much reading and no small personal experience have convinced me of the truth and applicability to this department of research of those lines of the nearly all-wise Goethe, cited by Zöllner, and thus rendered by Sir Theodore Martin:—

"Inscrutable in noon-day's blaze,  
Nature lets no-one tear the veil away;  
And what herself she does not choose,  
Unasked, before your soul to lay,  
You shall not wrest from her by levers and by screws."

But that, forsooth, is not "scientific!" "How are we to know that these things are true if we are not permitted to impose conditions exclusive of familiar or supposable agencies?" I reply that on the hypothesis, or one of the hypotheses, you desire to verify, your aim will *probably* be attained without these expedients, and will *probably* be frustrated by them. That hypothesis is that behind and productive of these phenomena are certain invisible beings, with a will, intelligence, and, presumably, a character of their own. Even if your tests offer no violence to *natural* conditions of which you are almost utterly ignorant, that is, if they do not oppose any objective difficulties in the way of invisible agents as anxious to satisfy you as you are to be satisfied, you have no right whatever to make the further assumption that there is such anxiety on their part, and that without caprice, partiality, or the influence of any motive other than pure scientific benevolence. Be appearances what they may, I don't believe that any medium, under strict test conditions, feels a perfectly friendly and cordial disposition towards the investigators who have imposed them, however civilly they may have behaved; and all our experience goes to show that distinct as may be the individualities of medium and Spirit, there is a remarkable sympathy between them. And though the medium, for his or her own sake, may desire the success of the experiment, our hypothetical Spirit will be more likely to decline the attempt, to play some impish trick perhaps, or even purposely to amuse himself with the suspicions of the unfavoured observer. And the pleasure of keeping other people in suspense when we could satisfy their curiosity at once, is not wholly confined to Spirits. And suppose they should choose to say "We will convince you, if you are to be convinced at all, in our way and not in yours." Would not that very probably be the attitude of intelligent beings on whom we are wholly dependent for the desired proof? If so, to go on insisting on our own methods when we find them almost invariably fail is as futile as it is arrogant. The alternative I would suggest is, therefore, simply this:—Abandon your elaborate tests, and submit, if necessary, to imperfect conditions of observation, treating as of no account, any phenomena which do not make up for this usual defect and carry conviction by their own spontaneous cogency and character. For this purpose let it be agreed in the circle that no phenomena shall be published unless every member admits that it is indisputably genuine. You may have long to wait for such evidence, but with a strong physical medium it will come at last. I should say, never mind what the character of your medium may be, or how many real or reputed

"exposures" may be among his or her antecedents. For I am not now thinking of the illogical public which insists at once that the evidence shall be absolutely independent of character, and that the character shall be good—and which would not be satisfactory even then. I may add that much of the best evidence I have had myself has been quite irrespective of Tests, and under wretched conditions of usual observation. On the genuine character of two or three of these cases I would stake whatever I possess, just as I would on the genuineness of some of Slade's slate-writing which I have witnessed.

Especially would I respectfully urge these suggestions on the attention of the Physical Phenomena Committee, of the Society for Psychical Research, should this letter come under the notice of any of them. It would be a grievous thing if the disinterested love of truth and scientific competency of these gentlemen should be baffled by insistence on false and exploded methods. I am convinced that if they go on tying up mediums and regarding the phenomena to be educed as quite independent of intelligent volition behind the scenes, they will have nothing but failure to report. And their report of failure will be very damaging to the public appreciation of existing evidence. I used to think, with "M.A. (Oxon.)," that we must insist, not so much on "tests," but on better conditions of observation, by abolishing the cabinet, &c. But, on the whole, I would far rather leave the problem of satisfying our understandings altogether to the agencies at work. Should it be necessary, and should they find themselves able to dispense with any conditions making observation difficult, they may be trusted to tell us so. That is, on the supposition that they exist; if the phenomena have some other origin and law we shall still best verify them by patient and gradual elimination of the elements of deception.

C. C. M.

#### STRANGE POWER OF AN ORIENTAL.

The following is a translation from a narrative contributed to *Licht, mehr Licht*, of August 20th:—

After the defeat of the Turks in the late war, a border town abandoned by the fugitives was occupied by a company of the victorious army, who quartered themselves in the deserted houses. The landlord of an inn, who had not taken flight, reported to a party of the military established in his house, that there was, in an upper room, a Dervish (Turkish monk), who had likewise remained, and whom he had seen perform things so wonderful as to be almost incredible. He offered to introduce his guests to this man, that they might see for themselves, as the Dervish was always ready to exhibit his mysterious power to serious observers. As it was known that among the Ismailite monkhood were many adepts of the secret art, great curiosity was excited by the landlord's account, and the guests agreed at once to visit the Dervish in a body. Thereupon some ten persons, introduced by the host, entered the apartment of the supposed magician. My informant is an officer, and was an eye-witness of the whole proceeding. He shall speak for himself.

"On our entrance, we saw the Dervish sitting cross-legged, after the manner of Orientals, on a cloth spread out on the floor. He received us with Eastern politeness and friendship, and invited us to sit down. The landlord having provided each of us, at our request, with a cup of Mokka, we sat in a circle round the Dervish, who courteously desired us to remain quiet and silent. \* He now took in his hand a small staff hanging on the wall above him, waved it twice in the air, and down there tumbled in front of us a flock of sprightly young geese, with the old ones. Another wave of the hand and they all disappeared.

"Again the staff was waved, and lo! the room was full of serpents, twisting and winding themselves all about, some of them as thick as a man's leg. Fear and disgust over-mastered us, as we saw this grewsome maze of serpents revolving about us from all corners of the room. In like manner as before, all vanished in a twinkling. We felt relieved when every trace of them had disappeared; and when the Dervish desired us to take courage for what was coming, assuring us that no one should be hurt, we waited with excited expectation, but without alarm. The Dervish made similar strokes in the air; and this time, notwithstanding our encouragement, we were again seized with anxiety, for we saw all four walls of the room in motion, approaching one another, and threatening to hem us in. We were neither drunk nor dreaming, yet we all saw the room become continually smaller. I believed my last hour had come,

\* Contrast this condition with the darkness and slugging required at Spiritualistic circles.—Tn.



and that the Dervish must either be the very devil, or in league with him, little as I had ever believed such fables. We now pressed together in the middle of the room that we might avoid, as long as possible, being crushed by the approaching walls, for there seemed no chance of anything else.

"We looked imploringly at the grave and undisturbed countenance of the diabolical Dervish. Ah! what was that? Another anxious glance, and the whole desperate-seeming situation suddenly changed. All was over. Everything had again resumed its normal appearance.

"We were in no way troubled by any after symptoms of nervous or mental disorder; we left the magician's room in perplexity, without having discovered or received an explanation of the prodigy, but very grateful for the mysterious entertainment. Without apparatus or assistants, without once during the whole time raising himself from his sitting posture, in the sight of us ten continually, this Dervish had been able to produce all the above phenomena with a stroke of his wand, and then again to dismiss them. It was no picture that we gazed upon, all was natural, solid, living. Having to resume our march, we could not avail ourselves of the Dervish's invitation to witness a second exhibition of his powers."

So far my informant. The Spiritist will perceive that the Dervish must have possessed the rare faculty and developed talent of "psychologising" his surroundings, as one knows from many similar cases, described by Professor Perty and others.

J. P. L.

### SUPERNATURAL APPEARANCES.

I send you some passages from a book long forgotten—"Personal Recollection of Forty Years Ago"—by Cyrus Redding. He may be added to the long list of those who "cannot account" for what they have seen.

S. C. HALL.

"While thus alluding to supernatural appearances I was myself puzzled sorely by a very singular incident connected with those unaccountables. I had called on a lady, about noon, in the height of summer, in one of the streets north of Oxford-street.

"I had not been in the house a moment before I saw that something unusual had occurred. Presently the mistress came in, and said they had been alarmed by a strange circumstance an hour or two before. A female servant had taken down her mistress's breakfast. The girl was approaching thirty years of age, and apparently of a temperament not likely to be easily alarmed; no fellow-servant was in the kitchen at the time. She went to the chimney-place for some water, and, fancying she heard a noise, and turning her head, looking over her head she saw a young man, who lived not far off, and who, some time before, had paid his addresses to her, but had been repulsed, for she did not like him. Startled, she fell on the floor senseless, where she was found, and afterwards related the foregoing circumstance.

"Something prompted her mistress to send and ask if the man was at home. He might have got in by stealth. How were they struck to find he had died that morning, and it was supposed about the same time the girl had seen him!

"I questioned all the parties, but found no discrepancy in their statements. The death of the young man was confirmed. The girl repeated that she had never encouraged his addresses, because she felt she could never attach herself to him.

"I placed this incident to the same account as another I will relate, equally unaccountable as far as human testimony goes. They make just the two out of a dozen, not more, to which alone I am unable to find any solution.

"Captain W., a gentleman I have long known, of unimpeachable honour, now living, after having served throughout the whole Peninsular War, was ordered from Spain to Nova Scotia, when peace was proclaimed in Europe, we being at war with the Americans. He was lounging in the mess-room of the barracks with another officer, I think in Halifax. It was noonday, and the sun shone brightly. Presently an officer in uniform walked in at a door in the further part of the room, looked at them, and passed out again.

"There is your brother!" said Captain W. to his companion, who recognised him also.

"Supposing the brother really had arrived in port, and would return, they stood looking out for him to enter again, but he never came. A mail or two afterwards, from Europe, brought an account of his death. It was still more singular that the intruder had upon his head a new regulation hat or cap, of which no pattern had reached America, and that both observers remarked the fact. When Admiral Coates saw his wife in India twice, and coming home, found her dead, it was no doubt the effect of imagination. How many husbands dream of dead wives, and *vice versa*, and find the contrary; but these cases are not noted. In the case of Captain W., it was, and is, to me, a great puzzle."

### INSPIRATION.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I hope Mr. George Barlow will pardon me for saying that I think he lays down the law a little too positively in reference to Inspiration. As a matter of fact there is nothing more common—I may say universal—in relation to humanity than Inspiration, and the word very properly defines its meaning; but the great question is upon what does its beauty, power, glory, and utility depend? Simply upon the refinement and cultivation of our minds and the elevation of the Spirits with whom our faculties are brought into communication.

As a mechanical illustration—and a very poor one it is, but it is the best that occurs to me on the spur of the moment—of the process of Inspiration, I may cite the bringing gas into contact with a flame. However bright may be this source of illumination, unless the gas is well-made, we shall get a very indifferent light. So it is with the results of Inspiration. If our minds are feebly constituted, the loftiest spirits in the Universe will never be able to achieve great things through a commonplace instrumentality. The veins might as justly complain that they are the mere conduits for nourishing the body, as the mind of man object to being considered the instrument through which lofty intelligences communicate with the world.

The principal occupation of angels and disembodied Spirits is helping and inspiring human beings on this earth; and when Mr. Barlow departs this life he will be surprised to find how much of his time hereafter will be occupied in assisting to instruct and develop those over whom he is appointed to be a guardian.

I cannot help regarding with some degree of pity the time which is being wasted by some eminent men in investigating the subject of Thought-reading. Its results are accomplished by the aid of guardian angels impressing the minds of those engaged in the pursuit; and children are generally the most efficient instruments in the performance of this work, because their faculties are less loaded with mental lumber which acts as an obstruction to those sensitive and delicate influences which accompany angelic ministrations.

We shall never thoroughly understand the subject of Spiritualism aright, until we have learned that conditions are as important as causes in the production of phenomena. Shakspeare himself could not succeed in inspiring a dull mind with bright ideas.—Yours, &c.,

TRIDENT.

London, September 2nd, 1882.

### MIND-READING.

The paper recently published on this subject, under the joint signatures of Mr. Myers, Mr. Gurney, and Professor Barrett, is one of the most important Spiritualistic papers ever published.

Not because it reveals any new truths, but because the experiments were so carefully and conscientiously made and avouched by authorities so conspicuous.

But, notwithstanding this admission, it must still be said that this paper affords no demonstration of direct mind-reading.

The sensitives operated on are, to my mind, evidently mediums; and indeed it is with me a question whether mind-reading can be demonstrated except by the aid of the mediumistic; and if so the mind-reading so clearly demonstrated by the above paper of recorded facts may all have come through the intervention of a disembodied Spirit.

I think it right to present this difficulty, because the object of the Psychical Research Society is not only to discover Spiritualistic phenomena, but to eliminate all sources of error; and thus, if possible, to establish a Spiritual science.

The same difficulty must occur in clairvoyance; and it must always be difficult to define how far the visions are given direct to the seers or entranced souls, or how far they are impressed by disembodied Spirits.

In the highest degree, however, of entrancement, I believe the soul, having passed through the chaotic stratum of Spirits, may see and speak and know the truth from itself, as an atom of the universal Spirit.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

Bude, Cornwall.

SÉANCE BY MISS WOOD.—On Wednesday evening, the 13th instant, Miss C. E. Wood will hold a select séance for materialisation. For tickets and other particulars apply to Mr. Jos. N. Greenwell, 15, Pakenham-street, King's Cross-road, W.C.



## INSANITY &amp; BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL.

A further portion of Dr. Nicolson's paper, entitled "Some Observations on the State of Society, Past and Present, in relation to Criminal Psychology," to which we referred in "LIGHT" for the 19th ult., appears in the April number of the *Journal of Mental Science*.

Dr. Nicolson quotes the reports of various trials for "witchcraft," one as late as 1709, and in commenting on them, says:—

"It is not necessary at this point to insist too closely upon what we may take to be the psychological value of a mere belief in witches or in witchcraft, for, as I have already said, such a belief is not to be taken as the measure of sanity or insanity; but when a belief of this sort leads up to a criminal act on the part of the person so believing, when it becomes the antecedent upon which that act depends, we can no longer blink the question."

"A murders B simply and solely because he believes B. has bewitched him, and worked evil upon him by charms and enchantments."

"Is A to be allowed to walk off, unheeded or unpunished, as one who has acted within his social rights, the homicide being, so to say, *justifiable*?"

"Is A to be hanged as a murderer?"

"Is B to be looked upon and treated as a lunatic?"

"Or again, A believes that B, possibly a total stranger, has bewitched him, and worked evil upon him. A refers his case to S (Society), whose authority is supreme and final, for adjudication. Upon A's statement, S interrogates, tests, tortures, and finally burns B as a witch. What are we to say of the conduct of S?"

"The relations of what is called 'witchcraft' to the criminal psychology of this dark period of European history are so complex that they are not easily capable of intelligible concentration."

"The belief in witchcraft, sorcery, and the like, had far too real an influence on the social life and character to warrant anyone in bringing the bearings of such a belief to a rough-and-ready focus, as 'stuff and nonsense,' and there dismissing the subject."

The conclusion which Dr. Nicolson comes to is that "Society created the crime, and manufactured (and likewise murdered) the criminals." We cannot quite follow what the writer really means by this conclusion, especially as he immediately quotes Blackstone, thus:—

"The civil law punishes with death, not only the sorcerers themselves, but also those who consult them. . . . Indeed, the ridiculous stories that are generally told, and the many impostures and delusions that have been discovered in all ages, are enough to demolish all faith in such a dubious crime, if the contrary evidence were not extremely strong. Wherefore, it seems to be the most eligible way to conclude, with an ingenious writer of our own (Addison, *Spectator*, No. 117), that in general there has been such a thing as witchcraft, though one cannot give credit to any particular modern instance of it."

As Dr. Nicolson says: "This is not a satisfactory way out of the difficulty; indeed, it is no way at all. . . . Let us see if we cannot find a more logical and consistent conclusion." He then goes on to speak of the cases of deviation "from the somewhat arbitrary average of intellectual capacity and national disposition (shall we say from the somewhat arbitrary average of sound mind?)," and explains what he considers the direct as well as the indirect relation of witchcraft with lunacy, and points out that there are plenty among us in the present day, both in and out of asylums, who would have been accused of witchcraft in days gone by.

Reference is made to a curious statement that at one time it was made a matter of reproach against the Turks that "they had amongst them neither sorcerers, witches, nor demoniacs, and the want of the latter was considered as an infallible proof of the falsity of their religion."

It is important to observe that in certain modern instances in which the letter of some of the old statutes has been invoked, the prosecutors have resorted to them with no belief in the reality of the crimes against which they were directed; and the question has consequently usually degenerated into an accusation, on the material plane, of "obtaining money under false pretences," thus:—

A receives some service from, or in some way is interested or instructed by B, (or is professed to be) in a manner which B deems real and legitimate.

A accuses B of deceiving him, and by foul means obtaining his money.

A refers his case to S (Society), and upon A's statement S imprisons or expels B, or would if it could get hold of him. What are we to say of the conduct of S? Is B to be looked upon, and treated as, a criminal or, if not, as a lunatic?

Dr. Nicolson has remarked:—"Need anything more be said to show that in the matter of witchcraft, Society not only created the crime, but also manufactured the criminals." Does not Society, in the way we have spoken of, still create the crime and manufacture the criminal? And though it may be said that the evils and the hardships are infinitesimal, compared with the horrors of the witchcraft prosecutions of two centuries ago, yet it is the case that a seriously retarding and repressing influence is exerted on the sensible and scientific investigation of whole classes of phenomena, by laws which still exist, unworthy of the so-called enlightenment of the present day.

The conclusion of Dr. Nicolson's paper is reserved for a future number of the *Journal of Mental Science*. E.T.B.

## PRESENCE AT A DISTANCE.

To the Editor of the "*Spectator*."

SIR,—May I be allowed to contribute, in illustration of the mysterious brain or "will" power supposed to exist, a story which appears to me more remarkable than any of the narratives that have yet appeared in your columns? A friend of mine told me that it was related to him many years ago, by my mother—the "Ann Taylor" of "Original Poems," "Hymns of Infant Minds," &c.—and that she mentioned the name of the family concerned; but this, unfortunately, he had forgotten. Certain circumstances lead me to believe that the family referred to was that of the Watkinsons, spoken of in the "Autobiography, &c., of Mrs. Gilbert," Vol. I., p. 26, as resident in her childhood—1786 to 1794—at Lavenham, in Suffolk. The story is as follows:—

A son of this family had gone to America. One summer Sunday afternoon, they were attending service, and occupying a large, square pew near the pulpit, in what I take to have been a meeting-house. It was hot, the door of the small building was wide open, and one of the party, who sat looking down the aisle, could see out into the meeting-house yard, which was shaded by tall trees. Suddenly, to his intense surprise, he saw the absent brother approaching through these trees, enter at the chapel-door, walk up the aisle, come to the very door of the pew itself, and lay his hand upon it as if to take his seat among them. At this moment others of the family, sitting so that he was only then within their sight, saw him also, but at that same moment he vanished.

This strange occurrence naturally raised sad forebodings, but in course of time a letter arrived from the subject of them of later date than that of the vision, and it appeared that he was still alive and well. He was then written to, and asked if anything peculiar had happened to him on that particular Sunday. He replied that it was odd he should remember anything about a Sunday then so long passed, but that certainly something peculiar had happened to him that day. He had come in, overpowered with heat, and had thrown himself upon his bed, had fallen into a sound sleep, and had a strange dream. He found himself among the trees before the country chapel; service was going on; he saw them all, the door being open, sitting in their pew; he walked up the aisle, he put his hand on the pew door to open it, when he suddenly, and to his great chagrin, awoke.

I am bound to say that, so far as I know, my mother's family—what remains of them—do not remember her speaking of this strange incident: but my friend has a clear memory for such things, and is certain of her having done so. It would be interesting, however, to know whether such a story is known to any-one else. If authentic, the question arises,—Can sleep release the soul like death?—I am, Sir, &c.,

Marden Ash, Ongar, Essex.

JOSIAH GILBERT.

SPIRIT TEACHINGS.—To the Editor of "LIGHT."—SIR,—In No. XXX. of those most interesting articles, entitled "Spirit Teachings," the following passages occur:—"Remember that you may be watching the manifestations of the presence of a being without soul, and so without conscience." "Either those who have passed through incarnation without progress, or those who have reached, but have not yet attained thoroughly to it. These last are most powerful agents, but they know no distinctions of morality." I am under the impression, but cannot, unfortunately, find the passage, that in some previous number of these lessons it has been stated that the rôle fulfilled by the earth among planets, was the important one of conferring personality. The above extracts would appear to infer that Spirit evolution is effected under a law entailing migration from planet to planet, and in the course of which migrations certain definite spiritual properties or mind qualities are imparted by each planet to the Spirit. Would "M.A. (Oxon.\*)" kindly consent to enlighten us by a few words of explanation as to "Imperator's" view of this subject?—Yours, &c., A SUBSCRIBER.



## SPIRITUALISM IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND.

By J. J. Morse.

The thought that perhaps a few notes of a recent visit to the western country might prove of interest to the readers of "LIGHT," must be my only excuse for trespassing upon the good-nature alike of its Editor and readers, though it is not unlikely that it will be a source of pleasure to many to know that the indications of coming activity in the above-named part of the kingdom are neither few nor insignificant.

By virtue of the co-operation of various parties, the writer was enabled to obtain a brief respite from his round of duties, and he concluded that he could best utilise the opportunity presented in uniting service to the Cause with the pleasures of a holiday. Accordingly, arrangements were made for visiting Bath, Bristol, Plymouth, Falmouth, and Redruth.

Reaching Plymouth on the evening of the 19th ultimo, a deputation of friends met and escorted the travellers to the pleasant home of Mrs. Miller, who made us, Mrs. Morse and self, quite at home during our stay. From Mr. R. S. Clarke, the Hon. Sec., the following, among other particulars, were obtained:—The local society is called the Plymouth Free Spiritual Society, and the President is Mr. J. Micklewood. The society is in a substantial condition, and owes its existence to the fact of the expulsion of the Rev. C. Ware from his denomination—the Bible Christians, I believe—in consequence of association with, and ultimate avowal of, Spiritualism. This gentleman has worked assiduously by pen and tongue in the interests of the Cause in Plymouth, and deserves every credit for so doing, as he has done so in the face of many obstacles and difficulties, not the least being the deprivation of his means of livelihood, and the loss of former friendships. The Cause in Plymouth possesses several good mediums, particularly Mr. Husson, who bids fair to become a most excellent and efficient trance-speaker. The work of the Society consists in services on the Sunday, and developing and other circles during the week, and Mr. Clarke assures me that a healthy interest is more than maintained; while frequent correspondence on the subject is indulged in through the columns of the *Western Daily Mercury*, by the courtesy of its editor. My public labours comprised two meetings on the Sunday, which were—in spite of very inclement weather—attended by full audiences.

The work of the Spirit Controls elicited full approval, and seemed to go right home to the hearts of the auditors. On the Wednesday evening we attended, by invitation, a tea-party, held in honour of Mr. S. C. Hall, and it is difficult to recall a speech that was more—or even equally as—enjoyable than the very able and eloquent one Mr. Hall delivered on that occasion. It was a treat that all present will remember for a long time. Among the friends we met may be mentioned Mr. Clement Pine, who is virtually the pioneer of the cause in Plymouth, having held circles, distributed literature, and advocated the matter for many years past; Mr. and Mrs. Dymond—the latter is developing as an excellent drawing medium; while Mr. Dymond, a member of the Archaeological Association, is an earnest and painstaking student of our facts and philosophy; Sergt. Lucas, of the Royal Marines, a new enquirer, many years a sceptic, but withal a scholar and musician of no mean abilities, and a gentleman to whom we were indebted for a very enjoyable inspection of the Marine Barracks at Stonehouse; Mr. Vincent Bird, of Devonport, an old Spiritualist, and brother in another cause; Mr. J. Bowring Sloman, of Plympton, whose purse and heart are alike devoted to the Cause; while a pleasant trip to Saltash enabled us to visit the beautiful home of Mrs. Snell, whose late husband became a Spiritualist after being a pronounced sceptic for the best part of a life-time. After visiting H.M. Dockyard, at Keyham, and various other points of interest, we finally left our good friends and journeyed on to Falmouth, where three public meetings had been arranged. These meetings were eminently successful, as in points of numbers and respectability there was nothing to be desired. The main burden of the Cause rests upon the shoulders of some five friends, and they deserve every credit for their disinterested services for the spread of truth. Mr. R. Gloyne, who presides at the public meetings, has been called upon to make serious sacrifices for his adhesion to Spiritualism, as also has been the case, in fact even more so, with Mr. C. Truscott, who acts as an informal secretary, while Messrs. Rundell, Carlyon, and Pain, are ever to the fore when help or service are needed. With carefully-conducted developing circles, free from all intrusions, the latent mediumship among the friends in Falmouth would soon be unfolded, and their hands proportionately strengthened. Rambles

on the sea shore, walks in the country, visits among the various friends, a water-trip to Mylor, and a never-to-be-forgotten excursion to the famous Lizard Point, and Kynance Cove, and the innumerable and kindly attentions bestowed upon us made our visit to Cornwall one round of pleasantries, for which tired bodies and jaded nerves stood so much in need. Thanks, indeed, are yours, good friends.

A pleasant visit was made to Redruth, where in company with Mr. Jenkin, the editor of the *Cornubian*—who stands alone in his battle for truth—we climbed the celebrated "Carn Brae," the view from which is more than magnificent, while during our walk there and back we chattered upon Spiritualism in its various aspects. Alas! bigotry we found had here, again, caused our amiable companion to suffer for daring to print in his journal comments and extracts favourable to Spiritualism!

A visit on our return was also paid to Bath, a private meeting being held, from which, no doubt, good will come.

On all sides information was obtained concerning the extension of Spiritualism—the matter being known, and having believers in Exeter, Torquay, Bristol, Clifton, and other places, and from the knowledge thus obtained it would be safe to say that there are strong indications that Spiritualism will assert itself as vigorously in the West as it has done in the Midlands and the North. In the brief compass at my disposal it is quite impossible to more than sketch the things seen and friendly services received, or the encouraging signs of activity noted during a fortnight's trip among the western friends of the Cause, though the editor of this journal will be pleased to hear that "LIGHT" was universally commended—the only regret associated with it being its present price. Returning home, refreshed in body and invigorated in mind, the round of daily duty has been resumed, and as I close, let me thank most heartily and sincerely all the friends who have in every case been so kind and attentive to Mrs. Morse and myself during our recent visits, though it would have been an increase of our pleasure could our stay in Bath have extended longer, as our friends Mr. and Mrs. Chever and Mr. Hill, by their most kind attentions, made parting from them a matter of great regret.

## "THE PERFECT WAY."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—With reference to the letter from the Countess of Caithness in "LIGHT," August 19th, having so great a regard for the authoress she names, and for herself, I cannot trust myself to make any comment on that letter, further than to say, that it is to me a cause of continual wonder and distress that so many Spiritualistic and philosophic minds fail to find in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the most perfect Theosophy which the human mind can conceive, and the most perfect nourishment for all those souls who hunger and thirst after righteousness—the teachings of "The (most) Perfect Way" to purity, unselfishness, love, truth, light, and Spiritual knowledge.

But although I cannot say more at present, I have great satisfaction in sending for publication (by permission) the following letter from one who always writes with that wisdom which is born of maturity of thought and devotion.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

DEAR DR. WYLD,—When Lady Caithness says that "thousands are literally starving for want of Spiritual food adequate to their present Spiritual growth,"\* I think we shall all agree with her, and with her rejoice, whenever this want is met by nourishing supplies; but as to the giving of a *new Gospel*—is it likely that a new one should be sent by God while the first is so much slighted, and the blessings promised by its bringer are so generally forfeited from neglect of conditions indispensable to their acceptance? The Lord Jesus Christ—whom, if we believe his assertions at all, we know to be the Truth as well as the Life—assured us of rest for our souls under the easy yoke of His meekness and lowliness of heart, of never again thirsting spiritually if we drink of the "Water of Life" that He offers. Have the hungry Spirits of our day attained that rest or quenched their souls' thirst? Have they found the peace which He bequeathed to all who deny themselves, taking up their cross daily, and following Him? And, if not, what good shall any interpretation of the mysteries of God do them until these offers are accepted, the painful mysteries of our own nature illumined, and its anguishing unrest appeased?

The promise of our Lord that His Spirit would guide into all truth is most precious to me, but no child is advanced to a higher class while elementary lessons are unlearned; and I dare not hope for more abundant revelations from on high until those already vouchsafed have been honoured by *practical* acceptance. When "lip-labouring Christendom" seems still so very far from

\* See Letter from the Countess of Caithness in "LIGHT" for August 19th.



peace or lowliness of spirit, and I find "the angel of knowledge" welcomed as the herald of a new Gospel, I ask myself with surprise, Can two Gospels differ so widely if they come from the same source?—Yours sincerely,  
A. J. PENNY.

### MEDIUMS AND MEDIUMSHIP.

A writer in an American paper, *The Olive Branch*, makes some pertinent observations on Mediums and Mediumship, and on the difference between normal and mediumistic utterances. The views which he brings forward will help to account for much that is confused and unsatisfactory in many so-called Spirit-communications, and also presents one explanation of the decay in vigour of thought and expression which is sometimes noticeable in the later as compared with earlier utterances of a medium.

"*Apropos* to the very numerous controversies that are now agitating the minds of many active and zealous Spiritualists, it is noticeable that several distinguished mediums are taking an active part and discoursing as 'having authority' beyond the common mass of thinkers. I here desire to call the attention of mediums strongly to the principles of mediumship, and to emphasise the distinction between the normal and the mediumistic utterances of all genuine mediums.

"First, it is fundamental that a true medium must be a *passive instrument*. This is as essentially necessary as that a normal thinker must be a *positive agent*. I know that there has been a good deal of talk about mediums being negative to spirits, and positive towards those in the form; but my observation has taught me that a normally positive mind is not a good medium for a spirit-control. All that spirits can do to advantage with such a mind is to influence it by suggestion, a widely different process from that of a spirit uttering its own independent thoughts through the organism of a medium. For example, the utterances through A. J. Davis while he was an illiterate lad, far transcended in dignity of tone, in vigor of expression and profundity of thought, any of his writings since he became a man of culture and an independent thinker. At the time the first revelations were dictated through him, his mind was a perfect blank as to nearly every subject discussed therein. In fact, he is described as having been singularly indifferent to every kind of thoughtful literature. The only exception is one mentioned by a clergyman, who testified that he lent the youth some theological books to read. Accordingly, I for one noticed in reading the 'Divine Revelations' that the clear, pellucid argument became turbid just where the discussion entered the region of theological polemics, a difference for which I could not account until I saw the statement of the clergyman above mentioned. Just here lies the boundary line between perfect and imperfect mediumship. The perfect medium should have mental faculties capable of being used for the expression of the most profound thoughts, the most elevated sentiments, the strongest and most delicate affections; in other words, the instrument must be perfect. But the instrument must also be under the perfect control of the operator. The spirit attempting to use the mind of a medium generally finds it more or less occupied with opinions of its own, with habitual moods of feeling and language, or modes of expression, which are so many embarrassments, inasmuch as the thoughts, feelings and fancies of the medium become mingled with the ideas of the spirit, and the mediumistic utterances are not altogether such as the spirit intended. Hence, we sometimes have, in spirit communications, a confusion of ideas and a jargon of words which are not characteristic of either the spirit or the medium.

"Many persons fall into the habit of feeling and manifesting toward mediums the same degree of deferential awe they feel for the exalted spirits who manifest through them. They treat mediums as if they themselves were superior intelligences, and ask their opinions on all important questions. Is it any wonder that many mediums become conceited and positive, and, instead of meekly obeying the behests of spirit-teachers, attempt to do business on their own account? On the contrary, it is greatly to the credit of a large proportion of mediums that they so well resist, as they do, the influences around them, which tend to inflate their vanity and puff them up with self-importance.

"The pertaining to all communications and manifestations of spirit-origin, is well calculated to guard us against receiving with unquestioning faith any message from spirits. We are not relieved from the task of doing our own thinking and exercising our own judgment. This is the more important when we consider the fact that spirits are themselves fallible; yet, so great is the tendency of some minds to receive as true all genuine spirit-revelations and to rest on them as the infallible words of God or of exalted intelligences, that the minds of such believers are apt to become dwarfed, and they are liable to become the passive slaves of design ambition."

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—GATESHEAD: September 10th and 11th.—For terms and dates, direct Mr. Morse, at 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, E.—[Advt.]

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW.

The September number opens with "Psychography," by "M.A. (Oxon)," being the first part of a new edition of his work under that title. The writer says:—"The object with which a revised edition of this little volume is presented to the public is to make known as widely as possible the nature of the evidence on which Spiritualists ground their belief. . . . Yet such is the mass of new phenomena which are constantly being forced on attention, that there is some risk that valuable facts may be lost sight of, especially by those whose acquaintance with the subject is recent. Many such are to be found, no doubt, among the readers of this *Review*, and I have, therefore, thought it well to place my facts before them prior to their re-publication in the shape of a book. I thus hope to reach a wider audience than I otherwise should." We believe with the writer that the evidence he presents will stand any fair sifting.

Mrs. A. M. Howitt-Watts contributes an interesting article on "The Dreams of Poets"; and "M.C.T.G." an "Invitation," which many will appreciate, to "the Feast of Dante Alighieri."

We feel bound to confess to being rather tired of the ancient Eastern religions in connection with Spiritualism, and should almost be glad not to see any more of the endless succession of names and classes and terms, with the endless variety of spelling adopted by different writers, for some time to come. Besides an article dealing with this subject, this month's number contains the usual well-edited "Monthly Summary" and "Notes and Comments," some correspondence, and a further instalment of "The Great Kingsbury Puzzle."

### GOSWELL HALL.

On Sunday morning last, Mr. Wilson, the Comprehensionist, delivered a lecture on his favourite theme, which it must be confessed was the most plain and concise that we have yet listened to. If he continues his advocacy on the same lines he will soon have plenty of followers and adherents. The Rev. C. Ware, of Plymouth, (who was mistakenly announced to lecture) made an efficient chairman, and to Mr. Wilson and him was accorded a hearty vote of thanks. In the evening a large audience assembled to hear our friend Mr. J. J. Morse and his guides, whose subject on this occasion was "The influence of the Spirit world on the progress of Spiritualism." At the present time this lecture was most opportune, and it is a great pity that it was not preserved and scattered broadcast throughout the ranks of Spiritualism. The modern movement, from its advent to the present time, was carefully and impartially portrayed, and its various successes, dangers, and difficulties enumerated, and the "Control" certainly succeeded most admirably in showing how absurd and ridiculous were the pretensions of a few who would presume to present and advocate a Spiritualism which, to a large extent, ignores the Spirits and their necessary co-operation with mortals for the sustenance of this grand philosophy. In regard to the phenomenal aspect, those individuals who are incessantly on the hunt for new and more complicated tests to apply to the medium received a severe and well-timed rebuke. Instead of so hastily drawing conclusions, thoughtful people were counselled to sift and examine the phenomena in a careful, un-biased, and systematic manner, when satisfactory results were bound to ensue. While condemning medium-worship they claimed for mediums that respect, love, and assistance which is due to each individual who gives up life to such a work, instead of the large amount of jealousy and mistrust which prevails at the present time. The Rev. C. Ware again occupied the chair, and at the close made a few pertinent and appreciative remarks, which were followed by Mr. Morse himself, who gave a brief *resumé* of his trip to the West of England. Mediums are particularly requested to note that on the 17th, Mrs. Mary S. Durrant will speak here on her experiences with Miss Wood *re* materialisation.—RES-FACTA.

### WORK OF THE COMING WEEK.

#### LONDON.

- Sunday, September 10.—Goswell Hall. 11.30 a.m., Members' Séance. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. J. Veitch.  
,, September 10.—Quebec Hall. 7 p.m., Lecture, Mr. MacDonnell.  
Tuesday, September 12.—Quebec Hall. 8.30 p.m., Lecture, Mr. Wilson.

#### PROVINCES.

Public meetings are held every Sunday in Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Leeds, Bradford, Gateshead, Newcastle, Glasgow, Leicester, Nottingham, Belper, &c., &c. See our list of Societies on advertisement page.

Societies advertising in "LIGHT" will have attention called to their advertisements, as above, without extra charge.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

P. O.—We believe that the Séances with Miss Wood are likely to be resumed. Write to the Secretary.